



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 3, 2007

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Creeks Division, Parks and Recreation Department
Water Resources Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Integrated Regional Water Management Plan - Public Review Draft

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council hear a presentation and provide comments on the Public Review Draft of the Santa Barbara Countywide Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.

DISCUSSION:

Since September 2006, the Creeks Division and the Water Resources Division have been working with the Santa Barbara County Water Agency, and 28 other local agencies and special districts, to prepare an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) for the Santa Barbara County Region. The City Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on August 1, 2006, authorizing City participation in the process. An approved IRWMP is required for accessing State grant funding under Proposition 50, Proposition 84, and other grant programs. The County of Santa Barbara is coordinating the effort to prepare the IRWMP and retained CH2MHill as a technical consultant. A public review draft was released on March 9, 2007. A copy of the Draft IRWMP has been placed in the Council reading file, the City Clerk's Office, and at the Santa Barbara Main Library. It is also available on the web at www.countyofsb.org/pwd/water/IRWMP.

IRWMP

The IRWMP is a living document that describes the region's water management setting, history, challenges, goals, objectives, and strategies. During development of the plan, the Cooperating Partners realized that much progress has been made over the years in regional water planning, but identified the following remaining areas of concern:

- The need to replace, rehabilitate, or upgrade aging infrastructure serving the general population and especially disadvantaged communities

REVIEWED BY: _____ Finance _____ Attorney

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- Risk of illness, especially in disadvantaged communities, from inadequate drinking water and pollution from wastewater
- Potential harm to people and property from flooding
- The loss of storage capacity in the four major reservoirs
- The need to operate and maintain water and wastewater systems in a manner that minimizes impacts to sensitive habitats and species and complies with federal, state, and local regulatory requirements
- Over drafted groundwater basins in North County
- The variable reliability of State Water Project water
- Water quality impairments in both groundwater and surface water bodies, including pollution of creeks and ocean water, especially from sediment runoff.
- The need for water supplies to serve a growing population
- The need for emergency planning to address potential impacts to water and wastewater facilities from floods, earthquakes, fires, as well as planning for (and responding to) periodic droughts

In response to these concerns, particular attention has been given to regional objectives and priorities (both long-term and short-term) and how they relate to State priorities and IRWMP requirements. Following is a summary of the regional objectives developed by the Cooperating Partners and discussed in more detail in Section 7 of the Draft IRWMP. The first four are required by the State's IRWMP guidelines. The last two were added by the Cooperating Partners in recognition of vulnerability to catastrophic interruption of water supplies and the growing problem of infrastructure replacement.

▪ Water Supply:	Protect, conserve, and augment water supplies
▪ Groundwater Management:	Protect current and future groundwater supplies
▪ Ecosystem Restoration:	Protect and restore habitat and ecosystems
▪ Water Quality:	Protect and improve groundwater, freshwater, brackish water, ocean water, and drinking water quality
▪ Emergency Preparedness:	Ensure secure water supplies by helping local water purveying districts address the impacts of future droughts, other water shortages, and emergencies such as earthquakes, floods, and fires
▪ Infrastructure Efficiency & Reliability:	Maintain and enhance water and wastewater infrastructure efficiency and reliability

Finally, a preliminary list and ranking of potential water management projects has been developed with an eye toward eventual preparation of implementation grant applications. As the region moves into the process of grant applications, the challenge is to identify projects that rank highly against State and regional objectives and to develop funding proposals that distribute available grant funding equitably across the region. This phase of

the work is currently scheduled to be completed in June 2007. The effort expended to date by the Cooperating Partners has set the stage for a constructive approach to meeting that challenge. The attached table lists the City projects that have been included in the Draft IRWMP for potential funding consideration. Projects range from wastewater collection system repairs and groundwater quality assessments, to water quality improvement and restoration projects. One particularly promising project would be the Lower Mission Creek Project due to readiness to proceed and meeting multiple objectives.

Development of the IRWMP has included local stakeholders interested in the management of the region's water resources. To date, three public meetings have been held to share the status and progress of the plan and to solicit input from the public. Public stakeholders include the Community Environmental Council, Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business, Santa Barbara Channel Keeper, Heal the Ocean, Environmental Defense Center, Surfrider Foundation, Urban Creeks Council, and several others. Furthermore, all Cooperating Partner meetings are open to the public. One additional public meeting is scheduled in April 2007 before the IRWMP is completed in May 2007.

Funding Opportunities

The State is currently deciding how remaining Proposition 50 funding should be awarded and is preparing for Proposition 84, the next big source of water project funding. It has \$52 million identified for the Central Coast "funding area," which includes Santa Barbara County, San Luis Obispo County, most of Santa Cruz County, Monterey County, and a few other smaller areas. Key staff of the Cooperating Partners has been working with representatives of the other regions in the funding area to develop a consensus on a cooperative approach to allocation of this funding.

Schedule/Next Steps

The public review draft was released on March 9, 2007 and comments are due on April 2, 2007. It is anticipated that the final IRWMP will be complete in late May. Staff will return to Council for approval of the IRWMP in June 2007.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The IRWMP relates to sustainability through the implementation of the regional objectives which include strategies to enhance and protect drinking and surface water quality, flood control, riparian habitat, and other community water management concerns. As each project is considered, specific sustainability impacts will be addressed.

ATTACHMENT: City Submitted Projects - Table Summary

PREPARED BY: Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

SUBMITTED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office